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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 001114

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/NB AND WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/2016
TAGS: PREL LH CU
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA CONSIDERING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH
CUBA

Classified By: Consul James Fellows for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (U) This is an action request -- see para four.

¶2. (C) MFA Americas Director Jonas Paslauskas told us
December 13 that the GOL was mulling the establishment of
diplomatic relations with Cuba. He cited two reasons for the
review of its current policy. First, he noted an increasing
volume of Lithuanian tourist travel to Cuba, which has
resulted inter alia in some Lithuanian citizens being
imprisoned there for what he called the "usual misbehavior."
Second, he said, was the GOL's sense that it was out of step
with the rest of the European Union -- Lithuania, he said, is
currently the only EU country without diplomatic relations
with Cuba. While the MFA has received some inquiries about
this discrepancy from other EU states, Paslauskas noted that
GOL officials who encounter GOC representatives are lobbied
relentlessly for a policy change. He added that Lithuania
does not envision opening an Embassy in Havana. (The GOL has
only one Latin American Embassy, in Buenos Aires.)

¶3. (C) Paslauskas hastened to add that the GOL was in no
great rush to establish diplomatic relations; would not make
any change in policy before President Adamkus's February
visit to Washington; and welcomed USG input on its decision.
He also noted that Lithuania, given its tragic history of
suffering under Soviet Communists, was under no illusions
about the nature of the Cuban regime. At the same time, he
pointed out, "we have diplomatic relations with countries
like China and Belarus, and so do you."

¶4. (C) ACTION REQUEST: We would appreciate guidance on how
to respond to the GOL on its Cuban trial balloon.
CLOUD